

REMARKS

The Office Action dated April 16, 2004, has been received and carefully considered. In this response, the specification and claims 1, 4, 6, 13, 21, 27, 32, and 36 have been amended. Entry of the amendments to the specification and claims 1, 4, 6, 13, 21, 27, 32, and 36 is respectfully requested. Reconsideration of the outstanding objections/rejections in the present application is also respectfully requested based on the following remarks.

I. THE OBJECTION TO DECLARATION

On page 2 of the Office Action, the declaration was objected for having an incorrect application number.

A new declaration document having the correct application number is attached.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the aforementioned objection to the declaration be withdrawn.

II. THE OBJECTION TO SPECIFICATION

On page 2 of the Office Action, the specification was objected for having blank spaces instead of application numbers.

The specification has been amended to address the concerns of the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the aforementioned objection to the specification be withdrawn.

III. THE INDEFINITENESS REJECTION OF CLAIMS 4, 6, AND 27

On pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action, claims 4, 6, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention.

Claims 4, 6, and 27 have been amended to address the concerns of the Examiner.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the aforementioned indefiniteness rejection be withdrawn.

IV. THE ANTICIPATION REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1 and 21

On pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Ellis (U.S. Patent No. 6,484,257). This rejection is hereby respectfully traversed.

Under 35 U.S.C. § 102, the Patent Office bears the burden of presenting at least a prima facie case of anticipation. In re Sun, 31 USPQ2d 1451, 1453 (Fed. Cir. 1993) (unpublished). Anticipation requires that a prior art reference disclose, either expressly or under the principles of inherency, each and

every element of the claimed invention. Id.. "In addition, the prior art reference must be enabling." Akzo N.V. v. U.S. International Trade Commission, 808 F.2d 1471, 1479, 1 USPQ2d 1241, 1245 (Fed. Cir. 1986), cert. denied, 482 U.S. 909 (1987). That is, the prior art reference must sufficiently describe the claimed invention so as to have placed the public in possession of it. In re Donohue, 766 F.2d 531, 533, 226 USPQ 619, 621 (Fed. Cir. 1985). "Such possession is effected if one of ordinary skill in the art could have combined the publication's description of the invention with his own knowledge to make the claimed invention." Id..

Regarding claim 1, the Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches the claimed invention. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches an internet customer access system (Ellis: col. 4, lines 46-65) comprising: a redirect receiving unit for generating a request for a capacity determination for a web site (Ellis: col. 7, lines 23-27); a capacity determination unit for determining if the web site has capacity to handle an additional customer (Ellis: col. 7, lines 23-41); a notification unit for notifying the customer if the web site currently has insufficient capacity (Ellis: col. 7, lines 43-44); and a redirect unit for redirecting the customer to the web site if sufficient capacity is found (Ellis: col. 7, lines 39-43).

However, it is respectfully submitted that Ellis fails to teach the invention as presently claimed. For instance, column 7, lines 23-44, of Ellis (and indeed all of Ellis) relate to the handling of communication sessions by partitioning the sessions for handling by multiple agents if a main server cannot handle the session alone. Specifically, at column 7, lines 23-44, Ellis teaches:

The Client(s) connects to the Main Server and authenticates using one of several servers known authentication methods 420. The Main Server determines if it can accept a new session based on its current available processor bandwidth. If the Main Server can accept a new session based on available processor resources, then it agrees on a secret session key with the Client(s) and begins the session(s). If the Main Server has insufficient resources to service the session 425, then it will instruct an Agent Server(s) to become unblocked [wake up] and participate in a multiparty key exchange between a Client, Main Server and Agent Server. If the Agent Server has insufficient resources it will notify the server that it cannot accept a new client session or maintain an existing one. If none of the Agent Servers can accept a new client connection then the server can handle the additional load or deny the connection based on configuration settings. If the Agent Server loses resources it will request that the Main Server pass the client connection to a new Agent which the Main Server will attempt to do. If the Main Server cannot pass the connection it will either attempt to handle the load itself or notify the client and close the connection.

Clearly, nowhere in this passage (nor anywhere else in the specification of Ellis) does Ellis make mention of a customer

accessing a web site, and determining whether the web site has the capacity to handle the customer. Indeed, Ellis does not even mention the terms "web site" or "customer" anywhere within its specification. Accordingly, Ellis fails to teach a redirect receiving unit for receiving a redirected customer web site access request from a network server and generating a request for a capacity determination for the web site, as presently claimed. Ellis also fails to teach a capacity determination unit for determining if the web site has capacity to handle an additional customer, a notification unit for notifying the customer if the web site currently has insufficient capacity, and a redirect unit for redirecting the customer to the web site if sufficient capacity is found, as presently claimed. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Ellis does not anticipate, or even suggest, the elements of claim 1.

Regarding claim 21, the Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches the claimed invention. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches a method for regulating access to a web site (Ellis: col. 4, lines 46-65), the method comprising the steps of: receiving a web site access request (Ellis: col. 7, lines 23-27); determining whether the web site has sufficient capacity to accommodate a customer (Ellis: col. 7, lines 23-41); redirecting the customer to the web site if sufficient capacity

is found (Ellis: col. 7, lines 39-43); and notifying the customer if insufficient capacity is found (Ellis: col. 7, lines 43-44).

However, for the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that Ellis fails to teach the invention as presently claimed. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Ellis does not anticipate, or even suggest, the elements of claim 21.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the aforementioned anticipation rejection of claims 1 and 21 be withdrawn.

V. THE OBVIOUSNESS REJECTION OF CLAIMS 2, 3, 11-13, 20, 22, 29, 33, 36, 37, AND 40

On pages 4-17 of the Office Action, claims 2, 3, 11-13, 20, 22, 29, 33, 36, 37, and 40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis (U.S. Patent No. 6,484,257) in view of Chang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,134,584). This rejection is hereby respectfully traversed.

As stated in MPEP § 2143, to establish a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine

reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combination and the reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art, not in applicant's disclosure. In re Vaeck, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991). Also, as stated in MPEP § 2143.01, obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988); In re Jones, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). The mere fact that references can be combined or modified does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggests the desirability of the combination. In re Mills, 916 F.2d 680, 16 USPQ2d 1430 (Fed. Cir. 1990). Further, as stated in MPEP § 2143.01, to establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. In re Royka, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). That is, "[a]ll words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability

of that claim against the prior art." In re Wilson, 424 F.2d 1382, 165 USPQ 494, 496 (CCPA 1970). Additionally, as stated in MPEP § 2141.02, a prior art reference must be considered in its entirety, i.e., as a whole, including portions that would lead away from the claimed invention. W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc. v. Garlock, Inc., 721 F.2d 1540, 220 USPQ 303 (Fed. Cir. 1983), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 851 (1984). Finally, if an independent claim is nonobvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious. In re Fine, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988).

Regarding claim 13, the Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches the claimed internet customer access system, except for a scheduling processor for scheduling access of the customer to the web site if the capacity determination unit indicates that no current capacity exists. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches an internet customer access system (Ellis: col. 4, lines 56-65) comprising: a capacity determination unit for determining if the web site has the capacity to handle an additional customer (Ellis: col. 7, lines 23-41); and a customer identification unit for determining whether the customer has scheduled access to the web site (Ellis: col. 6, lines 39-43). The Examiner acknowledges that Ellis fails to teach a scheduling processor for scheduling access of the customer to the web site

if the capacity determination unit indicates that no current capacity exists, but asserts that Chang et al. teaches a scheduling processor for scheduling access of the customer to the web site if the capacity determination unit indicates that no current capacity exists (Chang: col. 3, lines 27-31). The Examiner further asserts that Chang et al. teaches the system allows downloads and accesses at later specified times when rates are lower or traffic is reduced (Chang: col. 1, lines 44-49; col. 2, lines 64-67). The Examiner then goes on to assert that it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the internet customer access system as taught by Ellis while employing scheduling of access as taught by Chang in order to specify a time to access or download when traffic or rates are reduced (Chang: col. 1, lines 44-49; col. 2, lines 64-67).

However, similar to claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that Ellis fails to teach, or even suggest, the claim elements asserted by the Examiner. For instance, column 7, lines 23-44, of Ellis (and indeed all of Ellis) relate to the handling of communication sessions by partitioning the sessions for handling by multiple agents if a main server cannot handle the session alone. Again, specifically, at column 7, lines 23-44, Ellis teaches:

The Client(s) connects to the Main Server and authenticates using one of several servers known authentication methods 420. The Main Server determines if it can accept a new session based on its current available processor bandwidth. If the Main Server can accept a new session based on available processor resources, then it agrees on a secret session key with the Client(s) and begins the session(s). If the Main Server has insufficient resources to service the session 425, then it will instruct an Agent Server(s) to become unblocked [wake up] and participate in a multiparty key exchange between a Client, Main Server and Agent Server. If the Agent Server has insufficient resources it will notify the server that it cannot accept a new client session or maintain an existing one. If none of the Agent Servers can accept a new client connection then the server can handle the additional load or deny the connection based on configuration settings. If the Agent Server loses resources it will request that the Main Server pass the client connection to a new Agent which the Main Server will attempt to do. If the Main Server cannot pass the connection it will either attempt to handle the load itself or notify the client and close the connection.

Clearly, nowhere in this passage (nor anywhere else in the specification of Ellis) does Ellis make mention of a customer accessing a web site, and determining whether the web site has the capacity to handle the customer. Indeed, Ellis does not even mention the terms "web site" or "customer" anywhere within its specification. Accordingly, Ellis fails to teach, or even suggest, a redirect receiving unit for receiving a redirected customer web site access request from a network server and generating a request for a capacity determination for the web

site, as presently claimed. Ellis also fails to teach, or even suggest, a capacity determination unit for determining if the web site has the capacity to handle an additional customer, and a customer identification unit for determining whether the customer has scheduled access to the web site, as presently claimed.

Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that Chang et al. fails to teach, or even suggest, the claim elements asserted by the Examiner. For instance, column 3, lines 27-31, of Chang et al. (and indeed all of Chang et al.) relate to scheduling data downloads whereby a computer system need not keep power on until the download. Specifically, at column 3, lines 27-31, Chang et al. teaches:

A method and system is disclosed for scheduling data download, such as web pages, databases or softwares, over a network such as the internet without keeping the computer system power on all the time till the upcoming data download activities.

Clearly, nowhere in this passage (nor anywhere else in the specification of Chang et al.) does Chang et al. make mention of scheduling access for a customer to a web site if the web site does not currently have the capacity to allow for such customer access. Indeed, Chang et al. does not even mention the terms "capacity" or "customer" anywhere within its specification. Furthermore, the mere mention by Chang et al. that downloads may

be scheduled for times when phones rates and internet traffic are reduced in no way relates to the capacity of a web site to allow for customer access, as the Examiner suggests. Accordingly, Chang et al. fails to teach, or even suggest, a scheduling processor for scheduling access of the customer to the web site if the capacity determination unit indicates that no current capacity exists, as presently claimed.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Ellis and Chang et al. do not teach, or even suggest, the elements of claim 13.

Regarding claim 36, the Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches the claimed method for regulating access to a web site, except for scheduling access of the customer to the web site if insufficient capacity is found. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches a method for regulating access to a web site (Ellis: col. 4, lines 56-65), the method comprising the steps of: determining if the web site has sufficient capacity to handle a customer (Ellis: col. 7, lines 23-41); and determining whether a customer has previously scheduled access to the web site (Ellis: col. 6, lines 39-43). The Examiner acknowledges that Ellis does not explicitly disclose scheduling access of the customer to the web site if insufficient capacity is found, but asserts that Chang et al. teaches scheduling access of the

customer to the web site if insufficient capacity is found (Chang: col. 3, lines 27-31). The Examiner further asserts that Chang et al. teaches the system allows downloads and accesses at later specified times when rates are lower or traffic is reduced (Chang: col. 1, lines 44-49; col. 2, lines 64-67). The Examiner then goes on to assert that it would have been obvious at the time of the invention to one of ordinary skill in the art to create the internet customer access system as taught by Ellis while employing scheduling of access as taught by Chang in order to specify a time to access or download when traffic or rates are reduced (Chang: col. 1, lines 44-49; col. 2, liens 64-67).

However, for the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 13, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Ellis and Chang et al. fails to teach, or even suggest, the invention as presently claimed. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Ellis and Chang et al. do not teach, or even suggest, the elements of claim 36.

Claims 2, 3, 11, 12, 20, 22, 29, 33, 37, and 40 are dependent upon independent claims 1, 13, 21, and 36. Thus, since independent claims 1, 13, 21, and 36 should be allowable as discussed above, claims 2, 3, 11, 12, 20, 22, 29, 33, 37, and 40 should also be allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on independent claims 1, 13, 21, and 36. Moreover,

these claims recite additional features which are not claimed, disclosed, or even suggested by the cited references taken either alone or in combination. For example, claim 3 recites a customer identification unit for determining whether a customer has scheduled access to a web site. The Examiner asserts that Ellis teaches this feature at column 6, lines 39-43, by stating that "upon initialization the client contacts the gateway server and authenticates using RADIUS, TACACS+, a pre-shared password or X.509 certificate. Once the client is authenticated, it negotiates the session key with the gateway server." Clearly, this passage of Ellis does not teach, or even suggest, the claimed feature as Ellis does not even mention the term "web site" let alone identifying a customer to determine if the customer has scheduled access to the web site.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the aforementioned obviousness rejection of claims 2, 3, 11-13, 20, 22, 29, 33, 36, 37, and 40 be withdrawn.

VI. THE OBVIOUSNESS REJECTION OF CLAIMS 4-8, 14-18, 23-28, 32, 39, AND 41-44

On pages 4-17 of the Office Action, claims 4-8, 14-18, 23-28, 32, 39, and 41-44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis (U.S. Patent No. 6,484,257) in view of Chang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,134,584) and further in

view of Colby et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,625,643). This rejection is hereby respectfully traversed.

Claims 4-8, 14-18, 23-28, 32, 39, and 41-44 are dependent upon independent claims 1, 13, 21, and 36. Thus, since independent claims 1, 13, 21, and 36 should be allowable as discussed above, claims 4-8, 14-18, 23-28, 32, 39, and 41-44 should also be allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on independent claims 1, 13, 21, and 36. Moreover, these claims recite additional features which are not claimed, disclosed, or even suggested by the cited references taken either alone or in combination.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the aforementioned obviousness rejection of claims 4-8, 14-18, 23-28, 32, 39, and 41-44 be withdrawn.

VII. THE OBVIOUSNESS REJECTION OF CLAIMS 9, 10, 30, 31, 34, 35, AND 38

On pages 4-17 of the Office Action, claims 9, 10, 30, 31, 34, 35, and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis (U.S. Patent No. 6,484,257) in view of Chang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,134,584) and further in view of Lee (U.S. Patent No. 4,788,715). This rejection is hereby respectfully traversed.

Claims 9, 10, 30, 31, 34, 35, and 38 are dependent upon

independent claims 1, 21, and 36. Thus, since independent claims 1, 21, and 36 should be allowable as discussed above, claims 9, 10, 30, 31, 34, 35, and 38 should also be allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on independent claims 1, 21, and 36. Moreover, these claims recite additional features which are not claimed, disclosed, or even suggested by the cited references taken either alone or in combination.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the aforementioned obviousness rejection of claims 9, 10, 30, 31, 34, 35, and 38 be withdrawn.

VIII. THE OBVIOUSNESS REJECTION OF CLAIM 19

On pages 4-17 of the Office Action, claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ellis (U.S. Patent No. 6,484,257) in view of Chang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,134,584) and further in view of Colby et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,625,643) and further in view of Lee (U.S. Patent No. 4,788,715). This rejection is hereby respectfully traversed.

Claim 19 is dependent upon independent claim 13. Thus, since independent claim 13 should be allowable as discussed above, claim 19 should also be allowable at least by virtue of its dependency on independent claim 13. Moreover, this claim recites additional features which are not claimed, disclosed, or

even suggested by the cited references taken either alone or in combination.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the aforementioned obviousness rejection of claim 19 be withdrawn.

IX. CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is courteously solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the below listed telephone number, in order to expedite resolution of any issues and to expedite passage of the present application to issue, if any comments, questions, or suggestions arise in connection with the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136 is hereby made.

Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-0206, and please credit any excess fees to the same deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

Hunton & Williams LLP

Patent Application
Attorney Docket No.: 57983.000017
Client Reference No.: 12753ROUS02U

By: 

Thomas E. Anderson
Registration No. 37,063

TEA/vrp

Hunton & Williams LLP
1900 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006-1109
Telephone: (202) 955-1500
Facsimile: (202) 778-2201

Date: July 16, 2004

APPENDIX A

This patent application claims priority from U.S.
Provisional ~~P~~atent ~~A~~pplication ~~Serial~~-No. 60/217,595, filed on
July 11, 2000, and entitled "Internet Take-a-Number Service".
This patent application is related to U.S. Patent Application
~~serial n~~No. 09/713,293, filed November 16, 2000, (~~Atty. Docket~~
~~No. 57983.000027~~, ~~Client Reference No. 13848RO~~) entitled
"Technique for Adaptively Controlling the Admission of Web
Server Requests", and ~~in~~ U.S. Patent Application ~~Serial~~ No.
09/713,319, filed November 16, 2000, (~~Atty. Docket No.~~
~~57983.000008~~, ~~Client Reference No. 12671RO~~) entitled "Technique
for Adaptively Distributing Web Server Requests." The
aforementioned patent applications are ~~filed concurrently~~
~~herewith and are hereby incorporated~~ herein by reference in
their entirety.

APPENDIX B

1 (Currently Amended). An internet customer access system comprising:

a redirect receiving unit for receiving a redirected customer web site access request from a network server and generating a request for a capacity determination for ~~the a~~-web site;

a capacity determination unit for determining if the web site has capacity to handle an additional customer;

a notification unit for notifying the customer if the web site currently has insufficient capacity; and

a redirect unit for redirecting the customer to the web site if sufficient capacity is found.

2 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 1, wherein the notification unit comprises a scheduling processor for scheduling access of the customer to the web site.

3 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 2, further comprising a customer identification unit for determining whether a customer has scheduled access to a web site.

4 (Currently Amended). The internet customer access system of claim 32, wherein the scheduling processor comprises means for attaching a tag to athe customer system.

5 (Original). The internet customer access system of Claim 4, wherein the tag comprises an encrypted cookie.

6 (Currently Amended). The internet customer access system of claim 4, wherein the customer identification unit comprises means for detecting the tag on the customer system and means for removing the tag from the customer system.

7 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 3, wherein the notification unit comprises an update processor for informing a customer access system already possessing a tag of current accessibility status.

8 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 2, wherein the scheduling processor comprises means for providing appointment slots.

9 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 3, wherein the scheduling processor comprises means for providing

the customer with a position in a queue and means for providing an estimated service time.

10 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 9, wherein the notification unit comprises means for providing a customer with an updated place in the queue.

11 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 1, wherein the notification unit comprises means for notifying a customer that the site is full.

12 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 1, wherein the notification unit comprises means for notifying a customer that replay options are available.

13 (Currently Amended). An internet customer access system comprising:

a redirect receiving unit for receiving a redirected customer web site access request from a network server and generating a request for a capacity determination for the web site;

a capacity determination unit for determining if the web site has the capacity to handle an additional customer;

a scheduling processor for scheduling access of the customer to the web site if the capacity determination unit indicates that no current capacity exists; and

a customer identification unit for determining whether the customer has scheduled access to the web site.

14 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 13, wherein the scheduling processor comprises means for attaching a tag to a customer system.

15 (Original). The internet customer access system of 14, wherein the tag is an encrypted cookie.

16 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 15, wherein the customer identification unit comprises means for detecting the encrypted cookie on the customer system and means for removing the encrypted cookie from the customer system.

17 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 14, further comprising a notification unit having an update processor for informing a customer access system already possessing a tag of current accessibility status.

18 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 14, wherein the scheduling processor comprises means for providing appointment slots.

19 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 14, wherein the scheduling processor comprises means for providing the customer with a position in a queue and means for providing an estimated service time.

20 (Original). The internet customer access system of claim 13, further comprising a notification unit having means for notifying a customer that the site is full.

21 (Currently Amended). A method for regulating access to a web site, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a redirected customer web site access request from a network server;

determining whether the web site has sufficient capacity to accommodate an additional customer;

redirecting the customer to the web site if sufficient capacity is found; and

notifying the customer if insufficient capacity is found.

22 (Original). The method of claim 21, comprising notifying the customer that replay options are available.

23 (Original). The method of claim 21, further comprising determining whether the customer has a tag.

24 (Original). The method of claim 23, further comprising determining whether the tag is valid.

25 (Original). The method of claim 24, further comprising redirecting the customer to the web site if the tag is valid.

26 (Original). The method of claim 23, further comprising determining if the tag is expired.

27 (Currently Amended). The method of claim 26, further comprising performing scheduling operations if the tag is expired and providing the customer with an updated status if the tag~~cookie~~ is not expired.

28 (Original). The method of claim 21, wherein redirecting the customer to the web site comprises the steps of determining if the customer has a tag and removing the tag if present.

29 (Original). The method of claim 21, further comprising scheduling customer access if insufficient capacity is found.

30 (Original). The method of claim 29, wherein scheduling comprises providing the customer with a position in a queue.

31 (Original). The method of claim 29, wherein scheduling comprises providing the customer with an appointment.

32 (Currently Amended). The method of claim 29, wherein scheduling comprises leaving a tag on ~~at~~the customer system and providing the customer with a finite time for which the tag is valid.

33 (Original). The method of claim 29, further comprising determining whether a visitor has previously scheduled access to the web site.

34 (Original). The method of claim 33, further comprising providing a customer with updated position information.

35 (Original). The method of claim 33, further comprising

offering a cancellation and rescheduling option upon providing updated position information.

36 (Currently Amended). A method for regulating access to a web site, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a redirected customer web site access request from a network server;

determining if the web site has sufficient capacity to handle an additional customer;

scheduling access of the customer to the web site if insufficient capacity is found; and

determining whether a customer has previously scheduled access to the web site.

37 (Original). The method of claim 36, wherein scheduling access comprises scheduling an appointment for the customer.

38 (Original). The method of claim 36, wherein scheduling access comprises assigning the customer a position in a queue.

39 (Original). The method of claim 36, wherein scheduling access comprises providing the customer with a tag.

40 (Original). The method of claim 36, further comprising redirecting the customer to the web site if sufficient capacity is found.

41 (Original). The method of claim 36, wherein determining whether a customer has previously scheduled access to the web site comprises determining whether a customer has a tag.

42 (Original). The method of claim 41, further comprising redirecting the customer to the web site if the tag is valid.

43 (Original). The method of claim 42, further comprising performing scheduling operations if the tag is expired.

44. (Original) The method of claim 43, further comprising performing update processing if the tag is not yet valid and is not yet expired.